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SINO-SOVIET BOUNDARY IN THE PAMIRS

Recent press reports have drawn attention to the discrepancy between Chinese Communist and Soviet maps concerning the depiction of some 200 miles of the common frontier between the two countries in the Pamir area. Chinese maps mark this boundary as "indefinite," whereas Soviet maps show it as an international boundary without qualification.

This situation has been the subject of US intelligence attention for some years and has been treated in a number of CIA geographic intelligence issuances. Copies of three such articles dated 1951, 1953, and 1954 are attached to provide background information.

The following comments summarize the significant facts bearing upon the situation:

1. Available information indicates that the section of Sino-Soviet frontier under consideration has not been the subject of a boundary treaty between Russian and Chinese governments. It has been a common practice of US-produced maps to show the USSR-China boundary in the Pamir area as "indefinite."

2. As noted in the attached articles, Chinese Communist maps prior to late 1953 (and most Chinese Nationalist maps) drew a boundary considerably to the west of the generally accepted line, thus including some 25,000 square miles of presumed Soviet territory (plus the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan) within Sinkiang. Since late 1953, Chinese Communist maps have been consistent in showing the boundary as undefined but have been in general agreement with Soviet maps as to its delineation.

3. Soviet-produced maps have not been consistent in their depiction of the status of international boundaries. The 1954 Atlas Mira showed only the northern Burma section of China's boundaries as undetermined; the 1959 Atlas Mira, however, additionally indicated the Assam-China and the northwestern Kashmir-China borders as not yet determined.

4. At this time, boundary differences between China and the USSR in the Pamir area appear to be restricted to the cartographic level. A recent Peking publication, however, mentioned that border troops were building barracks and homes at an unspecified location "on the Pamir plateau."

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